Hello and welcome history friends patrons all to episode 28 of the VAP. Last time we examined arguably the most significant item to emerge from the TOV, the LON. Today, we’re going to continue the trend of examining the PPC’s most significant contributions to the historical debate, by looking at mandates. On 30th January 1919, mandates would be defined as a concept and, to the best of everyone’s ability, agreed to in principle if not in spirit, but before this was done, the question of what a mandate was and how this new system would work would have to be addressed. In this episode, we’re going to follow this process, sort of as a background story to the mandates idea. There’s an awful lot to unpack here, from the opposition of the dominions to the idea, to the fears of the French that the League would stick its nose in French business, to the busywork of the British and their determination to get the approval of WW, to WW’s apparent inability to define concepts which were said to be true to his heart. It is, I promise, a very interesting journey into the era nonetheless.

We’re going to avoid delving into the mandates themselves here, and instead examine the groups that campaigned for those mandates to come into being. Our coverage looks specifically at 27th and 28th January, with the 29th being filled mostly with Polish affairs that we’ll deal with in a later episode. What contemporaries of the Big three thought of mandates, including scholars of the period, is almost as important as what the big three themselves thought of mandates, because it gives us an idea of how popular or not the idea was, and how much potential lay within it. So, you could say that we’re going to examine the mandate for the mandate, but at the risk of overcomplicating things, it’s probably best that we just get into it. I will now take you all to 27th January 1919….

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

If the LON did not prove adequate to its task, general chaos and confusion would arise in all parts of the world. Therefore, the LON must succeed, and if all the delegates in this room decided that it must succeed, it would succeed.[[1]](#footnote-1)

This was just one of many prophetic statements uttered on 27th January 1919. It was on this afternoon a century ago that the time finally came for WW to address another of the vaguer aspects of his plan for reimagining the world – the system of mandates which was to replace the imperial system of old. Wilson avoided for the moment an explanation of how the mandates system would operate or be applied in the world, but it was accepted from the beginning that Germany’s colonies would not be returned to her. This principle coloured all that followed, for it was discovered that the allies, and their dominions, all had their own ideas about how these former colonies should now be disposed of. This was done by discussing some examples of mandatory powers and their role in the new world order which was being developed. SA and its mandate over Germany’s SWA colony was put forward, as was Japan’s vested stake in the Pacific, and her mandate over the South Pacific Ocean’s thousands of islands.[[2]](#footnote-2) After a lengthy diatribe by a member of the SA delegation who argued for the union of SWA with SA, it was the turn of the Australian PM, Billy Hughes, to speak. Australia had its eyes on Germany’s former New Guinea colony, but Hughes argued for annexation rather than ruling the region as a mandatory power. In doing so, he posed the first serious challenge to the mandates idea, and his point of view is therefore worth detailing.

‘They all desired to do what was right, but what advantage was to be gained by the appointment of a mandatory for NG in preference to handing it over to Australia?’ Hughes asked. Wilson’s replies; that the world did not want annexations, or that the mandatory system would afford Australia better security, fell on the deaf ears of Hughes. ‘The mandatory system could never be as satisfactory for NG as the direct system. It is said that the world favours the mandatory system because it is against annexations, but annexation was only bad when it made for imperialism.’ Australia was not engaging in imperialism, Hughes insisted, she was merely taking and ruling over land which the recent struggles and her noble progress in the realm of democracy distinguished as rightfully hers. Furthermore, OZ was a member of the LON, and…

…the people of Australia would never tolerate the ill-treatment of other peoples. They had fought against militarism for the liberty of the people. The choice between annexation and the mandatory system was a narrow one. There was nothing to be gained by the mandatory system that could not be got by direct government, except that the world was said to dread annexations. But he was positive that no one dreaded the annexation of NG by Australia. The world only dreaded annexation for imperialistic purposes or for the purpose of exploiting other peoples. But Australia was a democracy and responsible for its actions to the people. He would readily admit that the mandatory system would be applicable to other parts, but it could never apply to NG.[[3]](#footnote-3)

It appeared that Hughes had an answer for everything, much as the South Africans desired to see their writ expand, and saw no reason why the process had to be complicated, when it was only logical that underdeveloped neighbouring territories once ruled by the enemy should be absorbed. In fact, it only made sense to go for the most straightforward policy. Promising though the mandates system was, it did not have to be applied in every case, and in the NG case, Australia’s claim was more than justified. Perhaps in a bid to take the attention off his dominion’s PM, LG then attempted to set forth something of genuine importance for the PPC – a plan which detailed how exactly the mandates idea was supposed to work and be applied to the wider world.

LG asked some very reasonable questions, in a bid to test exactly how far Wilson’s conception of mandates had matured. ‘This was the first time’, LG reminded those present, ‘they had heard an exposition of the principle.’ He added that its practical application required ‘careful consideration, and he would like to consult his experts and discuss with them the proposals put forward in President Wilson’s speech.’ Money was a major concern of LG’s, as he expressed when running through the new mandates which would be on the market. Developing the lands which had been cleaved from the Ottoman Empire, such as Mesopotamia and Syria, would take vast amounts of money, and the improvement would only be felt after several years. So who was to pay for this – was the LON going to foot the bill? How would the mandatory powers levy enough funds from their populations to cover the costs of these improvements themselves? How were they to defend the long coastlines of the newer mandates themselves? Again, it was asked, would the League carry or at least share this burden?

Wilson responded by casting a very favourable light over the British Empire. The British Colonies had cost her a great amount, but through investment and protection, Britain had carried her burdens to the present, where now her dominions could represent a family of nations. This, indeed, was how Jan Smuts presented the British Empire when attempting to craft a formula for the LON, and Wilson referred to it, expressing his firm belief that just as Britain had done this for her dominions, he now wished the LON to create its own family of nations. Of course, it would fall to the mandatory powers to protect their mandates, but if these expenses or responsibilities were too extensive, Wilson opined that the costs would be shared by the League. At this, LG confessed that he would have consult his experts, and return to the question the next day.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Thus, when all reassembled the next morning on 28th January, they immediately set into the task of defining how mandates were to be applied, and where they should not be applied. LG reasoned that he saw no obstacle to understanding between himself and Wilson, but he urged the President to consider the unique position of the dominions and their relationships to the former German colonies; SA with SWA, OZ with NG and NZ with Samoa. The NZ premier spoke at some length on the connection of Samoa to NZ, and of the pre-existing examples New Zealanders have set with regard to their treatment of native peoples. Using the Cook Islands as an example, the NZ premier noted that his country had vastly improved the lot of natives in all regions it had come into contact with. It was even noted that a Maori had nearly been brought along as a representative, but that due to space constraints, this was not done. It was thus inferred, as his Australian and South African counterparts had done, that the record of NZ spoke for itself, and there was no need for a mandate to be imposed on German Samoa. Instead it would make far more sense to institute an annexation of that country properly into NZ’s economic and political sphere. If NZ refrained from doing her job, then the League was welcome to intervene, but the premier reasoned that it only made sense to forge ahead with the most natural form of association between NZ and Germany’s former colonies, much as it did in the other examples from the other dominions.

Wilson had responded to NZ premier in the same tone as he had when speaking with Australia’s; by saying that the US had a vested interest in seeing former colonies treated fairly, and that the League was a firm guarantor of such a new age. In addition, Wilson remarked that in Samoa, the American flag also flew, and NZ would therefore be a neighbour to the American jurisdiction. What reason would NZ have for worrying about her security, or her rights, with America, her historic friend, so nearby? In short, Wilson’s response was a mixture between reassurance that NZ would get what it wanted, and a reiteration of his point that NZ would not assume the role Germany had fulfilled in Samoa as its imperial master. With the US as her neighbour, indeed, there would be even less tolerance than before for the imperialistic behaviour espoused by Berlin than there had been before 1914. At this weighted moment, Clemenceau declared the discussion at an end, because it was time to focus on the dispute between China and Japan over the Shantung province, which Japan was presently occupying.

The Chinese position in the PPC was at once full of potential and immensely disappointing for its delegates. Lumped into the camp of the small powers with two delegates, the Chinese wasted no time in expressing the fact that whereas the dominions represented only a few millions, these Chinese delegates represented some 400 million – ‘one quarter of the human race’, as they put it. The Chinese declared their thanks to the Japanese and the British for destroying the German menace, but added that ‘they would be false to their duty to China and to the world if they did not object to paying their debts of gratitude by selling the birth right of their countrymen, and thereby sowing the seeds of discord for the future.’ To this, the Japanese referred to a document which had been published the day before, which justified Japan’s current position with respect to the Shantung region. Part of this status quo was based upon treaties which the Chinese had signed long ago. The Chinese repudiated this point, and noted that the war had changed everything, and that besides, these treaties had long been regarded as temporary and open to revision anyway. Clemenceau then adjourned the meeting for a lunch break, likely compelled to do so by the high temperature and anxiety of the two Asian powers.[[5]](#footnote-5)

The afternoon of 28th January opened with Clemenceau’s presentation of France’s colonial interests, specifically with regard to Togoland and Cameroon, and her desire to annex them outright rather than adhere to a mandates system. To make his argument, unusually for Clemenceau, he deferred to the French Colonial Minister Henry Simon. According to Henry Simon, France was proceeding in this manner for the same reason NZ, OZ and SA had also acted – because it made the most sense under the circumstances. Annexation, Simon said, is association with the image of exploitation and seclusion from the rest of the world, as the imperialist makes the colony his own private domain. Yet, Minister Simon explained, these ideas…

…were part of a theory which was today quite obsolete and condemned by all. France had higher aspirations, and the colonies were no longer considered as a kind of close preserve for the exploitation and benefit of the individual. Higher moral principles now guided the nations. All the great powers worthy of the name, considered their colonies as wards entrusted to them by the world…the work of civilisation could only be carried out under the auspices of the sovereignty of a country.

The Colonial minister added to this that anyone who might fear French intentions or sincerity, should recall that France had always held the welfare of these peoples close to heart, and that she had always striven to protect them from harm. Free trade, the removal of tariffs, the liberally minded opening up of these territories to foreign investment and trade, and the limitation of harmful produce like alcohol or guns would greatly aid these regions still further. Referring to WW’s fifth point on the fair treatment of colonies and the removal of imperialism from the world, it was further reasoned that France had fulfilled these obligations, and that she had always had the interests of the peoples of NA close to heart – hence the reason why she had stuck around for so long and improved the standards of the region. At this, Henry Simon left the room, and Clemenceau attempted to refer the discussion back to the dominions and their ambitions for Germany’s former colonies. LG requested instead that rather than specific cases, they look at the principle of mandates and the formula which would be used when applying it. It had only taken two days, but it seemed that after all the pontificating, the SC was about to work at defining such a promising and elusive concept.[[6]](#footnote-6)

What were the responsibilities of a mandatory power? In other words, if these former German colonies, or Turkish territories, were placed as mandates into the hands of a new power, then that power, as a mandatory power, would have a certain role to fill. At no point had it ever been made clear what this role would be. Incredibly, WW attempted at this point to delay the discussion on the grounds that everyone’s opinions were differing on the question, and that it would ease the tensions which may exist. Balfour, the FS, disagreed that Britain was in any way opposed to the concept of mandatory powers or to mandates generally, he simply desired that some definitions be made as to what it all meant. Balfour was correct when he said that he knew ‘of no paper or speech in which the practical difficulties which they had to face had been worked out in detail.’ Balfour also wanted to know additional details, like whether the mandatory power would be appointed for good, or on a temporary basis, whereupon another power could assume their position if they weren’t doing a good enough job. Unsurprisingly, Wilson demonstrated here his penchant for procrastination and for maintaining vague ideas, at the risk of potentially alienating his closer supporters. In spite of Wilson’s initial hesitation, the discussion would continue on the matter of mandatory powers for another hour or so.

The pressing of the President for more details must have been especially frustrating for the British, because several months before, the idea of what a mandatory power would look like had already been debated. From late November to early December 1918, several inter-allied war conferences – the most significant being the Supreme War Council which crafted the armistice terms – and countless British Imperial War Cabinet meetings attempted to anticipate what would be agreed to at the final peace conference. As we have seen, the allies’ conception of how the peace-making process would proceed was fundamentally flawed, and was based on the idea that everything would be resolved quickly. Flawed though these expectations were, it was still immensely valuable to take the time to debate and discuss the pertinent questions which lurked in the background of the PPC. In the final weeks of 1918, the British were particularly active in their Imperial War Cabinets in gathering the relevant voices together and asking them what they imagined would follow the pre-1914 world.

If it was accepted that there had to be a change, what would this change look like? As we have also seen with the LON idea, people weren’t just waiting around for the American President to make a decision or clarify his remarks – a good thing too, since this process took far too long, and LG’s frustration with Wilson’s vagueness, as we saw in the last episode, was very real. The Empire was too important in any case to allow an American to deliberate on its future, and so the key British personnel determined to take up this role instead. In the last few days of November 1918, during an Imperial War Cabinet meeting, LG set forth his interpretation of what the mandates system would look like, and what a mandatory power would be expected to do:

It was generally agreed that 'mandatory occupation' did not involve anything in the nature of condominium or international administration, but administration by a single Power on certain general lines laid down by the League of Nations. These lines would naturally include equality of treatment to all nations in respect of tariffs, concessions, and economic policy generally. Similarly, there would be no militarisation, or fortification of the territory in question. Finally, there would be a right of appeal from the mandatory Power to the League of Nations on the part of anyone who considered himself ill-treated, or claimed that the conditions laid down by the League of Nations were not being fulfilled. Subject to such appeal, which might involve the League of Nations withdrawing the mandate in the case of deliberate and persistent violation of its conditions, the mandate would be continuous until such time as the inhabitants of the country themselves were fit for self-government.[[7]](#footnote-7)

We might ask then, if the British had an idea of how the system would work, why they were so concerned with what Wilson thought. The answer is relatively simple – allied unity was essential in the post-war order, as was legitimacy. Unity and legitimacy were two qualities that could best be attained by working alongside the American President; if he didn’t see things the British way, then his stubbornness could be overcome gently – it was imperative that he wasn’t backed into a corner, but led to that corner in such a way that he felt he had arrived their himself. Manipulation, in other words, was a critical part of this process. Having said that though, there were those that believed Britain’s newfound superiority in the post-war world should not be taken advantage of.

When, during another IWC meeting in early December 1918, Jan Smuts waxed lyrical about the benefits of a British Empire stretching up the length of Africa, forming an unbroken chain of Imperial red of the map from SA to Egypt, he was speaking for a plan which would in time be adopted. In Balfour’s mind though, LG merely notes in his memoirs that the FS ‘suggested that the line of argument pursued by General Smuts was perhaps playing a little fast-and-loose with the notion of mandatory occupation.’ Another figure present at this meeting was Edwin Montagu, the Secretary for India, who noted caustically that: ‘It would be very satisfactory if we could find some convincing argument for not annexing all the territories in the world.’[[8]](#footnote-8) Still, it is very hard today to view the mandates system as anything other than as Empire 2.0.

While there may well have been well-meaning bureaucrats and officials, and even statesmen present at the PPC, who wanted to fight for the rights of these peoples, the majority of the time, these colonies were recast as mandates, their flaws and shortcomings as human beings paraded before those civilised folks in Paris, and sympathy, twinned with a sense of opportunism, led the way into their countries. To take just one example, we need look no further than Edwin Montagu, the sceptic who asked whether Britain should not rule the world. Montagu, as Secretary for India, represented India at the PPC, and introduced several delegations of natives to those assembled in Paris. At no time though was it ever imagined that these natives should represent Indian interests, thus you had the curious situation where a Cambridge educated British statesmen was said to speak for India, solely because it was his job to do so. Edwin Montagu, it was inferred, knew the Indians better than they knew themselves, and in any case was better equipped to speak for them. Sometimes, at certain points during the PPC, the cringe-metre reaches new heights, but DLG was not himself averse to discussing the parcelling up of the world, with the kind of blithe frankness that reads more like a debate over what one wanted from a restaurant menu than what territory one was taking in the world. As LG wrote regarding a meeting he had with the Big Three sometime in spring 1919:

I asked Colonel House whether America would be prepared to accept a mandatory in respect of the Turkish Empire, and I pressed him specially as to their view for taking a mandate for Armenia and Constantinople. He replied that America was not in the least anxious to take these mandates, but that she felt she could not shirk her share of the burden and he thought America would be prepared to take mandates for Armenia and Constantinople. He talked of a plan he had for raising money for the improvement of Constantinople at a low rate of interest. He also said in reply to a question that America would be prepared to exercise some sort of general supervision over Anatolia. I then said to Clemenceau: 'France, I suppose, will undertake Syria.' He answered: 'And Cilicia.' I said: 'That is a question between America and yourselves.' He said: 'No, it is a question between you and ourselves.' I replied: 'No, we have no interest in Cilicia in the least; we make no claim except to Mosul, which you agreed to give us.' He assented to this and said: 'Any agreement which you make with the Americans we shall certainly assent to.' And I suggested that in order to save time somebody of a conciliatory mind should discuss this matter with both sides. I said: 'Have you anybody of that kind?' He replied, putting his finger on his own chest: 'Only myself.' I said: 'Colonel House and I were discussing this yesterday and said exactly the same thing – that you are the only man it is possible to come to an agreement with in France.'…I then said that America would accept a mandate for Constantinople, Armenia, and supervision for Anatolia; France would be mandatory for Syria and such parts of Cilicia as would be agreed upon between the Americans and the French; we would take Palestine and Mesopotamia, which includes Mosul. Then something was said about the Italians. I then remarked that if we decided not to remain in the Caucasus the Italians had shown some indication of a desire to occupy that territory. Neither the French nor the Americans greeted this announcement with any enthusiasm. Colonel House suggested the Georgians could be asked whether they would like to have the Italians there. Clemenceau answered: 'That is an excellent proposal.'[[9]](#footnote-9)

Whatever new name or flavour imperialism was now couched in, there was no hiding the fact that Britain, France and the US had a new opportunity to expand their influence in a world shorn of four major powers. This is arguably where the allied victory in the GW manifests itself the most strikingly, in the powerlessness of the CPs to contest any claims made now by the allies to foreign lands. To the victor go the spoils, as the saying goes, and the allies were determined that the spoils should be theirs, even if these spoils were not cast as spoils, but as responsibilities which their civilisation could not ignore, or as lands which were in desperate need of cultivation or improving that only western methods could manage, or as people in need of a protector, a mandatory power.

WW went on a lengthy rant on the subject of mandates, without offering much in the way of substance. Wilson’s concerns revolved around the potentially bad PR which might result from the impression that the victors were indeed dividing up the spoils between themselves, rather than helping to craft a new world order which had been promised. GC confessed himself unable to approve of the version of the LON which was now looming into view; it was unrealistic to propose the creation of this all-seeing, all-doing League, without equipping it with the teeth necessary to enforce its commands. If it was given executive or legislative power, how would its rulings be enforced? Instead, Clemenceau urged the adoption of a League of Defence, which retained much of the LON’s missions, but represented a significantly less ambitious version of Wilson’s vision. By keeping the peace, Clemenceau insisted, the world would not need to concern itself so much with whatever new laws the League passed. Collective security, though the term was not used, was what Clemenceau was proposing – he also desired an end to kicking the can down the road, or placing the mandates in the portfolio of the League, when the League’s purposes and structure had yet to be fully fleshed out. It was in the end determined that all should break and think hard upon what had been discussed.

The next day was filled with discussions on Poland, as the Council of Ten bid farewell to the Polish Commission which was en route to the new Polish state. Before the Poles left they spoke at length on their aims, their anxieties and the overall situation in Poland. We will dedicate time to this day of discussions, that is, the 29th January, in another episode, but before we wrap up this episode, it is worth examining the viewpoints of two historians when it comes to the issue of mandates. The first is from an article in the American Political Science Review, and was written in July 1919, just after the Treaty of Versailles and the mandates system was signed into being. It provides an interesting and immensely useful contemporary account of what scholars thought about the mandates system, and what it would mean for the future. The author of the article, Pitman Potter, wrote the following:

The present arrangements for the government of the colonial territories taken from Germany and Turkey in the World War, arrangements which may collectively be described as the system of mandates under the League of Nations, may work well or they may work badly. They may persist into an indefinite future, they may come to an abrupt termination and leave nothing of their own kind in their place, or, most probable of all, they may be progressively modified in one way or another with the passage of time and changes of circumstances. But, whatever happens hereafter, the present system is now an accomplished fact, and will necessarily be taken as the basis for any action in the future. The apparent inclination of at least one great power to insist upon all its rights in former German and Turkish territories now under mandate to other powers, and the firmness of the latter in defending their position under the mandate system, indicate, further, that the present system has already created rights, interests, and claims on one side and another which will call for constant consideration and regulation as time goes on.[[10]](#footnote-10)

Twenty years later in 1939, when the world seemed on the brink of war once more, Walter Langsam wrote *In Quest of Empire: the Problem of Colonies*, a short pamphlet published by the Foreign Policy Association, and designed to serve as a warning from history to those that still advocated imperialism. Langsam was particularly biting with his interpretation of the mandates idea, because to him it not only appeared like more of the same, it actually followed some of the old guiding principles of the secret treaties which had been set down between 1915-17. In spite of the high minded rhetoric, Langsam noted, the allies and their dominions still managed to gobble up a great deal of what they wanted, and their new acquisitions in people, land and resources were recast as sacred civilising missions, but not everyone was fooled. Langsam wrote:

The actual mandate distributions followed closely the lines of certain secret treaties drawn up by the Allied Powers during the World War; hence it seemed to many that they were merely selfish land-grasping acts in disguise. But the mandatories were definitely regarded as stewards for the League and were required to make annual reports on their administration to a League body called the Permanent Mandates Commission... The "mandate system," as this compromise came to be called, was written into the Covenant of the League of Nations. And the Covenant, in turn, was written into the Treaty of Versailles and into the treaties that the Allies drafted for the lesser enemy states. Thus the mandate system became an integral part of the whole peace settlement.[[11]](#footnote-11)

That fact proved critically important; the TOV did not merely saddle Germany with war guilt and reparations, it also baked concepts like the LON and the MS into international law, once the treaty came into effect in January 1920, these concepts also came into effect. In later episodes, we will examine efforts in the US to separate the TOV from the LON, in a bid to make it more palatable, but these efforts would be in vain. The complete package, and everything that the Treaty of Versailles represented, is thus far more significant than traditional narratives may have led us to believe; it wasn’t just an attempt to punish the most infamous member of the CPs, it was also an effort to start over with new ideas and a new approach to solving international conflict. We will look in more detail in the next episode at what the finished version of the mandates system looked like, but it helps us now to defer to the perspective of John Spencer Bassett, who in 1930 wrote a book detailing the history up to that point of the LON, to mark its tenth anniversary. On the subject of mandates, which the League was responsible for owing to the cumbersome agreements previously made, Bassett made the following judgement. The extract is somewhat long, but summarises where mandates as an idea were heading by late January 1919, so it’s worth listening to what he had to say. Bassett wrote:

Since these inhabitants in general were undeveloped people, placing them under the mandate system was looked upon as creating "a sacred trust for civilization." The Covenant in projecting the mandates, explained its purpose by saying: "The mandatory powers in so far as they be appointed trustees by the League of Nations, will derive no benefit from such friendship." These words were solemnly repeated by the mandatory powers, but there were many scoffers. The mandates, they said, only concealed faintly in a pious form a state of absolute ownership which no one was willing to avow openly. As the mandates were created by the states writing the Treaty of Versailles, so they were assigned by Allied and Associated Powers to the countries wishing to receive them. Each country would draft the terms on which it assumed a mandate, and when the terms were approved by the Council of the League the assignment of the mandate was complete. It was only in this third stage of the process that the League appeared in the matter. Its authority continued from that time on; for once created the mandate was exercised under League supervision. For this purpose the Covenant provided for a Mandate Commission "to receive and examine the annual reports of the Mandatories and advise the Council on all matters relating to the observance of the Mandates." The function of the League, therefore, is to receive the mandates after they are created, and through a Mandates Commission to exercise general supervision.[[12]](#footnote-12)

Getting to the point where mandates could be imagined and defined accurately would take some time, and in the minds of those that led the Big Five at the Council of Ten, the process had taken far too long already. There was also an abundance of questions, and too few answers. The British conceived of the idea in a certain way, and urged their dominion brethren to accept mandatory status rather than straightforward absorption and annexation. The French feared that the League would stick its nose in French colonial…I mean mandate business, but Clemenceau was careful to insist that he did not oppose the mandates idea on principle. WW was also in possession of an opinion, but unfortunately for his peers, he took far too long to produce much else.

While the British and French were animated in their fears, ideas and aims, Wilson urged caution, wanted to have a recess, or wanted to defer to the LON, and wait until that body had been founded before defining what it meant to rule a mandate as a mandatory power. Where once the concept seemed like a get into empire free card, by the final days of January 1919, it was clear that the process of explaining mandates looked eerily similar to virtually everything else in need of discussion or debate; the whole thing was taking too long. Within a fortnight, Wilson would have to return to the US, and before that deadline was reached, it could be certain that the attentions of those assembled would be pulled in different directions, away from the critical process of defining how the post-colonial world would operate. Already it had been shown that not everyone agreed with the mandates idea – the dominions wanted to annex their spheres of interest instead, the French wanted the League to keep out, the British wanted everyone to get on with it, but for a detailed framework of how the machinery were going to work to be agreed upon, and WW apparently wanted to delay making any specific decisions or detailed pronouncements on the question. All of these issues would be repeated on 30th January in spades.

A pattern was beginning to emerge; perhaps the mistake had been to believe that arriving at a quick decision was possible in the first place? Perhaps, this supposedly preliminary conference and its attendees had bitten off more than they could chew, and far more than they could swallow or digest. Time would tell, but another test awaited on 30th January 1919, when, it was hoped, all would get to the bottom of what a mandate actually was, and what its protector would have to do. The clock continued to tick, and the Quai d’Orsay was again filled with men that held the same questions they had had a week before.

1. Council of Ten, *The Paris Peace Conference 1919*, volume III, p. 742. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Japan’s Pacific mandate is examined by a contemporary in Paul H. Clyde, *Japan's Pacific Mandate* (New York: Macmillan, 1935). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Council of Ten, pp. 743-747. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *Ibid*, pp. 747-752. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. *Ibid*, pp. 753-757. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. *Ibid*, pp. 758-763. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. David Lloyd George, *The Truth about the Peace Treaties*, vol. 1 (London: V. Gollancz, 1938), p. 118. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. *Ibid*, p. 120. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. David Lloyd George, *The Truth about the Peace Treaties*, vol. 1 (London: V. Gollancz, 1938), pp. 288-290. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Pitman B. Potter, ‘Origin of the System of Mandates under the League of Nations’, *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (Nov., 1922), pp. 563-583; p. 563. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Walter Consuelo Langsam, *In Quest of Empire: The Problem of Colonies* (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1939), p. 24 & p. 58. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. John Spencer Bassett, *The League of Nations: A Chapter in World Politics* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1930), pp. 24-25. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)